



WORK SESSION OF THE GREENBELT CITY COUNCIL held Wednesday, August 11, 2004, for the purpose of meeting with the chairs of Council's advisory boards and committees.

Mayor Davis called the meeting to order at 8:03 p.m. It was held in the Multipurpose Room of the Community Center.

PRESENT WERE: Council members Konrad E. Herling, Leta M. Mach, Edward V. J. Putens, Rodney M. Roberts, and Mayor Judith F. Davis.

STAFF PRESENT WERE: David E. Moran, Assistant City Manager; and Kathleen Gallagher, City Clerk.

ALSO PRESENT WERE: Eva Griffin, Advisory Committee on Education; Charles Jackman, Advisory Committee on Trees; Bill Wilkerson, Advisory Planning Board; Adrienne White, Arts Advisory Board; Steven Skolnik, Board of Appeals; Pamela Gregory (for Judith Ott), Board of Elections; Kevin Hammett, Community Relations Advisory Board; Hugh Jascourt, Employee Relations Board; Christopher Husker (for Lola Skolnik), Park & Recreation Advisory Board; Silke Pope, Public Safety Advisory Committee; Neal Barnett, Recycling & Environment Advisory Committee; Esther Herold (for Phyllis Budin), Senior Citizen Advisory Committee; and Andrew Mangum, Youth Advisory Committee.

Following introductions, Mayor Davis first expressed Council's appreciation to the advisory groups for their work and for their advice to Council over the year. She added that there would be times when Council would choose not to go along with a committee recommendation but that this did not mean it had not been taken into account and given serious consideration. She said Council not only makes referrals to the boards, but the boards initiate activities or suggestions to Council. Mr. Putens commented that it was best if the boards alerted Council to any activities they were self-initiating, in order that there not be conflict with activities of Council, staff, or other advisory groups.

Update on Board and Committee Activities: The Mayor asked each representative to comment on the recent activities or initiatives of the group. She noted that a number of the groups had been holding public forums, including SCAC, YAC, PSAC, and the AAB. CRAB: Mr. Hammett said a long-standing project, the community Wall of Honor, was at last beginning to take shape. REAC: Mr. Barnett said his committee continued to schedule cleanups and plantings at the Lake. He added that the subject of use by the City of herbicides had received a good deal of discussion and a more formal review was upcoming. ACT: Dr. Jackman said his group had developed a draft policy on invasive species that he understood had now been referred to REAC, APB, and PRAB and would then go to Council. SCAC: Ms. Herold said they are now making plans for their fall open forum, which is scheduled for September 11. PSAC: Ms. Pope said two public meetings have been scheduled on the towing issue: September 9 at Springhill Lake and September 15 at Greenbriar. Another issue of concern to the committee is the incidence of children falling out of windows at Springhill Lake. Committee members continue to

research call-boxes and are also preparing to host their annual booth at the Labor Day Festival. ACE: Dr. Griffin said ACE was anticipating bringing in a series of speakers at meetings and would notify Council of the schedule. She said a topic of recent concern has been traffic issues at the high school, which have been causing students to be late to school. Noting that the City has a history of interest and activity regarding pedestrian and traffic issues in this area, Council encouraged early and close communication with City staff in order that there not be conflict with the City's efforts. PRAB: Mr. Husker said the board is looking at the invasive species policy and has been actively involved in projects related to the skateboard park and Greenbelt Lake issues. ERB: Mr. Jascourt said the board was only recently in a state of having no pending employee grievances, having been much busier than usual for the last two years as it conducted a series of grievance hearings from the compensation study. AAB: Ms. White said the board was now working with consultants on the long-awaited lighting for the gym stage. YAC: Mr. Mangum said the skateboard park continued to be the committee's main interest. He said they had tried a different format for the YAC Open Forum last spring, but the very bad weather did not give it a fair test. Mayor Davis speculated on whether the City might get better feedback from young people via the Internet rather than asking them to speak at a meeting. BoA: Mr. Skolnik said the board needs to meet only occasionally, since its scope is specific, and it waits for cases to be presented. He said a common case is that a resident will wish to construct a deck but will need a variance from the building code because the house is sited oddly on the lot. APB: Mr. Wilkerson said the board had been dormant recently, but was looking at modifications proposed to the Greenbelt Theatre and over the winter had participated in a charrette on the redevelopment of Springhill Lake and reviewed one phase of plans for the new Hilton hotel. BoE: Ms. Gregory said the board considered the 2003 election to have been conducted successfully. She said the board would be doing an overall review of the election code and was also interested in the controversy over adding a "paper trail" to the electronic voting machines.

Recruitment and Appointment Process: Mayor Davis said there were not many vacancies on advisory groups now, but she encouraged chairs and committee members to help with recruitment. Councilmembers noted that many applications were being received from new residents to the City who wished to become involved very quickly and that applications were being received from highly qualified people.

Roles of Council and Staff Liaisons: Mayor Davis stressed that the purpose of having a Council liaison was not that the Councilmember would necessarily attend meetings on a regular basis; not only should the advisory groups have a voice that is independent from Council's, but Councilmembers often have other standing commitments, including City Council meetings, that would conflict with regular attendance. Rather, the Council liaison should be available if needed or as a contact to Council on issues. Mr. Putens added that a Council liaison could also work indirectly as a resource to the chair.

Advisory Group Communications/Attendance: It was stressed that a copy of the group's minutes should be sent to the City Clerk for forwarding to Council and the City Manager. Ms. Gallagher distributed a list showing which advisory groups had asked to receive minutes from other groups. She asked that any additions or deletions from this list be given to her and added that staff liaisons should send these copies of minutes directly to one another, not to her. Mayor Davis asked if getting a quorum was a problem with any groups and stressed that if a group member was causing a problem,

that information should be relayed to the City Clerk or to Council so that it can be dealt with. Ms. Gallagher added that it is easiest to handle this situation prior to taking reappointments to Council for action, but they should be brought up whenever they occur.

Dr. Jackman raised an issue regarding reports submitted by ACT and other groups on the draft Forest Preserve ordinance. He asked if the reports had all been taken into account, since many of them shared the same concerns but had not heard what had happened. Mr. Roberts responded that the issue with those reports was that Council had decided in some particulars to go in a different direction than that recommended by the boards, but the reports had been read and taken into account. Ms. White asked whether, in the case of the AAB's reports on contribution and recognition groups, Council raises the concerns the board expresses. Mayor Davis assured her it does. Ms. Pope said the PSAC does not always know the status of its reports either. There was discussion of setting up a somewhat more formal process for notifying advisory groups about the status of reports. Council asked that staff give consideration to a means of accomplishing this.

Ms. Gallagher said anyone wishing to receive copies of agendas and minutes of regular Council meetings by e-mail should let her know.

Other Matters

Mr. Herling commented that he was glad to see that advisory groups have more encouragement from Council to initiate activities than was the case back in the day of his early service on City boards.

The Mayor asked if there was a date yet for the annual Advisory Group Appreciation Dinner. Ms. Gallagher explained that the setting of the date had been delayed this year because of the usual caterer's unfortunate decision to move to another state. She said she hoped it would be Sunday, October 24.

Other Business

Mr. Moran distributed copies to Council of the revised draft of the playgrounds agreement.

Mayor Davis said Council needed to decide its approach toward planning and zoning authority issues for the upcoming year. Mr. Moran said he would talk to the City Manager about it and bring the topic back to Council.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Kathleen Gallagher
City Clerk